

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

February 19, 2019

2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Jim Jackson, Scottie Ard and Ron Volkert

Others Present: Craig Yehlik, Jim Vanderwyst, Mike Darrow, Jake Sather, Mike Kastens and Lori Brinkman

Jim Jackson called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Scottie Ard moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Ron Volkert and carried.

Scottie Ard moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of September 25, 2018, seconded by Ron Volkert and carried.

Safe Routes to School

Scottie Ard discussed the fact there are no sidewalks or trails along West Eighth Street and the southern portion of South Dakota Avenue. She has observed many adults and children walking in the street. Over 20 children wait at bus stops along West Eighth Street and have to wait in the street or on people's property; this is a safety concern. Scottie would like to have an agenda item added to the next Public Works Committee meeting to discuss sidewalk/trail possibilities along West Eighth Street and South Dakota Avenue. She also wondered about adding "school bus stop" signs in this area.

CBD Oil Update

Police Chief Craig Yehlik gave an update on CBD oil possession. As discussed at the last Public Safety Committee meeting, a legislative bill has passed stating that bi-products of legally grown hemp are legal to end users (including oils), however, State Statutes still state that bi-products of hemp are illegal. The NRPD has stopped enforcing the CBD Ordinance because it is hard to enforce due to the legislative bill (the NRPD does continue to issue violations for vaping devices which are illegal on school grounds). Chief Yehlik continues to wait for the Attorney General to release a statement so there is clear direction for law enforcement officers. Scottie stated language is being addressed in numerous bills going through Madison right now about hemp bi-products. Chief Yehlik will talk to other law enforcement agencies to find out what they are doing with regard to CBD oils and will provide an update at the next Public Safety Committee meeting.

Squad Car Video/Body Cameras

Chief Yehlik explained that the Police Department's squad car cameras are old and obsolete. They were purchased approximately nine years ago and subsequently the department received some old cameras from Barron County to use for parts to keep the current system functional. Staff can no longer find parts to continue to fix the cameras and their functionality is outdated. Sergeant Jake Sather has been researching new squad car cameras along with body cameras. He looked closely at four companies and their products: Getac, WatchGuard, L3 Technologies, and Panasonic Arbitrator. Sergeant Sather is recommending moving forward with purchasing equipment from Getac. They are the most cost effective (\$38,744 compared to over \$45,000 for Panasonic and even more for WatchGuard for similar equipment). The \$38,744 fee includes: cameras/microphones for 6 squad cars, 18 body cameras, hardware, software, and redaction software. The fee does not include cloud storage, on-site setup and training, those numbers are not firm as of yet. It also does not include approximately \$650 for removal of the old camera equipment. The Getac equipment is easy to use, syncs automatically, is GPS-trackable, and allows for quick response times for Public Records

Requests. Sergeant Sather will demonstrate the videos to the Mayor and City Council on March 11. Chief Yehlik also showed a sample of a gun camera that they would like to look into purchasing in the future. This is not sold by Getac and would be a separate item for consideration at a future date. Sergeant Sather will see if Getac sells anything similar that works with their product. He did show video from the gun camera which was very clear.

Scottie Ard made a motion to authorize Staff to get quotes and to work on policies for squad car cameras and body cameras and bring them to City Council for consideration at the March City Council meeting, and further directs Staff to research gun cameras, seconded by Ron Volkert and carried.

Drug Task Force MOU Update

Chief Yehlik provided an update on the St. Croix Valley Drug Task Force. This task force is comprised of the Sheriffs of St. Croix, Polk, and Pierce Counties, along with the Chiefs of Police from Hudson, River Falls, and New Richmond. The task force provides assistance with overtime reimbursement, complex investigations, access to specialized equipment and covert work areas. The task force created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which was presented to City Administrator Mike Darrow and Mayor Fred Horne this week for signatures. Chief Yehlik noted that Detective de la Cruz is very active with this group and many benefits have been realized to date.

Mobile Field Force

The Public Safety Committee previously approved the New Richmond Police Department moving forward with the Mobile Field Force. This joint operation is spearheaded by the Rice Lake Police Department and includes officers from Hudson, River Falls, and New Richmond. Chief Roux of the Rice Lake Police Department wrote a grant and recently found out that our Mobile Field Force has received the grant money. Equipment has been purchased for the three NR officers (de la Cruz, Anderson, and Shafer). These officers have previously been trained in mobile field force so any additional training will be advanced training. They will also be “train the trainer” certified so they can train the entire New Richmond Police Department at no cost. Between the training and the equipment, Chief Yehlik states the New Richmond Police Department will be well prepared by the end of the year.

K-9 Agility Equipment Update

At the last Public Safety Committee meeting, the Committee approved the placement of K-9 training equipment in the vacant, City-owned land south of the Police Department. The intent was to split material costs with the St. Croix County Sheriff's Department and to have the high school construction class assist with building the training equipment. Since that time, St. Croix County pulled out of the project. It is beneficial for Officer Chevrier and Storm to train in New Richmond rather than traveling to Hudson. The New Richmond Boy Scouts and Officer Shaffer have built hurdles and boxes which will be used once the snow melts. Chief Yehlik explained that as funds are available in the K-9 fund, Officer Chevrier will seek out another entity to assist with building projects for the remainder of the agility equipment. There is a possibility that the boxes could reside at the New Richmond Airport as there is room and the area is fenced in.

Squad Car RFP Process

The City Council previously approved the purchase of two new Ford Police Squad Cars. Since that time, the Ford plant that was scheduled to build the squad cars has closed, so the Police Department will not be able to obtain the two squad cars as originally planned. Dewalt has offered a discount of \$2,000 per car to order directly through Ford. Staff recommendation is to post a Request for Proposals for local dealerships to submit bids for Ford Explorers outfitted for the Police Department as previously agreed upon.

Scottie Ard made a motion to authorize the Police Department to post a Request for Proposals for two Ford Explorer police vehicles, not to exceed the original quote approved by the City Council, seconded by Ron Volkert and carried.

Communication/Miscellaneous

Chief Yehlik stated 117 burgers were sold at the K-9 Burger Night fundraiser last week. He thanked Champs for helping put this together.

Officer Brad Thompson has resigned from the NRPD due to a family relocation. His last day will be March 1, 2019. He has been with the NRPD for a little more than two years. Chief Yehlik wishes him well.

There will be a Packer Tailgate party at the airport in April. Chief Yehlik continues to be in touch with Rob Kreibich with the Chamber of Commerce for details on the event.

Ron Volkert moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jim Jackson and carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Minutes by Lori Brinkman